1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
AW50 Badaga AW50

651 was the extent or position of the lands to be cultivated
656 specified. The ryot used his implements whenever and wherever he pleased. No restrictions, even on the felling of forests, were imposed, so that the hill-sides and valleys were cleared at will. The system was abolished in 1862. But, during the settlement, I found this erkādu kothukādu system still in force in the flourishing Badaga village of Kinnakorai, with some fifty houses."

622 In connection with the local self-government of the Badagas, Mr. A. Rajah Bahadur Mudaliar writes to me as follows. "In former days, the monegar was a great personage, as he formed the unit of the administration. The appointment was more or less hereditary, and it generally fell to the lot of the richest and most well-to-
622 do. All disputes within his jurisdiction were placed
627 before him, and his decision was accepted as final. In simple matters, such as partition of property, disputes between husband and wife, etc., the monegars themselves disposed of them. But, when questions of a com-
622 plicated nature presented themselves, they took as their
623 colleagues other people of the villages, and the disputes
627 were settled by the collective wisdom of the village elders. They assembled at a place set apart for the purpose beneath a nīm (*Melia Azadirachta*) or pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) on a raised platform (ratchai), generally situated at the entrance to the village. The monegar was *ex-officio* president of such councils. He and the committee had power to fine the parties, to excommunicate them, and to readmit them to the caste.
622 Parents resorted to the monegar for counsel in the dis-
584 posal of their daughters in marriage, and in finding brides for their sons. If any one had the audacity to run counter to the wishes of the monegar in matters

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

villages, however, the Kurumba watchman has these duties.[19] It is recorded that in the nineteenth century they were also 'weaving a kind of sackcloth',[20] but today neither they nor anyone else can recall this activity.

Alone of all phratries the Toreas are under a slight disadvantage in the Badaga judicial system. In villages where other Badagas also live they may find that, while being permitted to bring cases to the village or commune council and to sit through its deliberations, they must not take part in the discussion that leads up to the headman's decision. A Torea village headman who is excluded from a meeting of the commune council may not complain about such demeaning treatment in the way that any other headman in the commune undoubtedly would. The depressed status of Toreas is symbolized by the fact that during the great memorial ceremonies for a deceased generation *(Manemale)* the Toreas have a separate, smaller catafalque beside the main one.

Many of the twenty-six Torea villages are adjuncts to Gauda villages, set off from them by a mere stone's throw; but a group of nine Torea villages on the eastern edge of the plateau are so isolated that their only close contact is with the Wodeas of De:na:du.

Toreas have two clans, and in many villages both are represented. Despite the well-known precedents in other phratries, they have not begun to marry non-Toreas.

The Toreas can be offered vegetarian food in the houses of all higher phratries and meat in those which habitually eat it themselves. Recently some Gaudas have interdined with Toreas on an equal footing, in their inner rooms, although traditionally none of the other groups would allow Toreas into the inner, more sacred room; they were expected to eat in the outer one. 'If they should eat food with other Badagas, the Toreyas must clear away all remnants of the feast—nobody else will help' (Benbow, 1930, 11). No other phratry, not even the Christians, will accept food in the house of a Torea (Tignous, 1911, 117). In terms of the commensality rules pertaining elsewhere in India the Toreas may therefore have the appearance of a low or untouchable caste; and it is true that, Christians apart, they are the lowest of the Badaga phratries. There is nevertheless a Badaga rule that 'foreigners' and plainsmen may not enter the inner room of any Badaga house: they may be offered food only on the veranda or in the outer room. Badaga

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

hundred buffaloes permanently in the Moyar Ditch under the charge of Kasuvas because of shortage of grazing around Be:ragani itself. The herdsmen are paid from temple funds.

As in the case of Kurumbas, Irulas and Uralis, a Kasuva band may perform at Badaga ceremonies in place of the customary Kota one. Aside from this, there is one annual ceremonial event which has brought the two communities together in considerable numbers over the past decade or so. This is a complex *pu:ja* to the goddess Sikkamma at her Kasuva-owned temple in the Moyar Ditch, held every March. Roughly five thousand Badagas and most Kasuvas attend, the highlights of the event being *pu:ja*, a free meal, and a noisy night-time procession with the goddess' image mounted on an electrically lit elephant.

BADAGAS AND URALIS

The Uralis are a tribe of gatherers and shifting cultivators who inhabit jungles on some southern slopes of the plateau. They have no regular connexion with Badagas, but as they are feared for their sorcery they can depend on alms from Badaga villagers should a crop failure force them to wander up onto the plateau, as it occasionally has. Under unusual circumstances Badagas may pay a band of Uralis to perform music at a ceremony when for some reason Kotas cannot be invited.

THE WAINAD GAUDAS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS

The Wainad Gaudas are Badagas who settled on the lower plateau some two centuries ago. In proximity to them are various other groups: Kotas, Chettis, Panias, Irulas, Kurumbas and until 1925 some Todas. The Gaudas, a dominant community in the area, cultivate dry and irrigated rice. They claim it was the desire for rice which had prompted their ancestors to move down into the Wainad from Badaga villages on the Nilgiri Plateau.

The community consists only of Gaudas, except one commune which also has some Toreas (now calling themselves Gaudas). The 951 people live in ten communes, each made up of a few hamlets containing one lineage. Every commune has a council, and for complex cases a council of all the Wainad communes is held at

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AM50 Badaga AM50

Pandalu:ru village. This system thus parallels that of the Nilgiri Badagas but does not link up with theirs: cases cannot, for example, be referred to the paramount chief of the Badagas in Tu:ne:ri, and he does not invite Wainad Gaudas to his councils. The head of the all-Wainad council is someone noted for his justice, called the Great Headman (*dodda gauda*); he is selected from any of the communes. Each commune is headed by a man termed the *jammaka:ra*, under whom there are two or three lesser headmen (*kudiare*). Both of these offices are inherited fraternally; i.e., they pass from brother to brother in order of seniority, then on to the eldest brother's eldest son, and so on. Each *kudiare* is responsible for the descendants from one particular Nilgiri division: in Kolepalli, for example, there are two such headmen because its population is descended from Todana:du and Me:kuna:du villagers. As in the hills, a legal dispute passes up this hierarchy from the *kudiare* to the Great Headman if necessary.

These Gaudas have maintained some marriage connexions with Nilgiri Gaudas, even with families of the gentry. Several communes still intermarry with the Nilgiri Badagas of So:lu:ru; but more generally all of the communes marry endogamously or exogamously within the Wainad community. Their constituent hamlets, being single lineages, are always exogamous.[26]

There is a nineteenth-century account of trading parties of Wainad Gaudas regularly visiting the Me:kuna:du village of Ke:ti (and presumably elsewhere on the plateau), bringing with them buffaloes and gold dust 'for sale' (B.E.M.S., 1854, no. 14, 41).

These Gaudas had no connection with the Todas who, until the 1920s, lived on the edge of the Wainad, but some do maintain an exchange relationship with the Kotas there and also with certain Irulas and Kurumbas. The Kota partner from Gudalu:ru provides pottery as well as a pole used in Gauda funerals, to which he should also bring Kota musicians. He helps, too, with house building (Ranga, 1934, 26). In return he gets an occasional buffalo. Irulas and Kurumbas may also provide music for the funerals. Like the Panias they are valued as basket-makers but have no reputation for sorcery here as they do elsewhere. The Kurumba watchman institution is not encountered in the Wainad.

Gauda landowners have a special relationship with the Pania tribe, some of whom were their praedial slaves.[27] As if to justify this situation some Wainad natives claim the Panias originated as African slaves who escaped from two British ships in Calicut

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

shield the wrong-doers, but even to aid in the perpetration (Grigg, 1880, 411; Francis, 1908, 295).

The power and influence of the *manegar* was vastly greater in the last century than it now is: '... when he visited any village within his jurisdiction, the monegar had the privilege of having the best women or maids of the place to share his cot according to his choice'.[14] Girls were only one kind of bribe that might secretly be used to secure his sympathies: clothes and feasting were much commoner. The autocracy of these local officials is well illustrated by 'stories ... of a Monegar of one village who ordered an individual who had disobeyed his orders to be covered with a slab of stone' (Natesa Sastri, 1892, 831–832).

Just as alien as the British notion of a headman's role was the idea of electing a council; and yet a supposedly elected *panchayat*[15] became the official organ of local government shortly after the First World War. (Its duties today are to provide certain facilities, notably the up-keep of roads and paths, water supply, community radio, maintenance of land records and birth and death registers, and the supply of information about governmental activity.) Despite the appearance of village *panchayats* and of a state police force in some villages, the organization of celebrations and the settlement of disputes have remained very much in the hands of the traditional headman, his festival committee and his council. Criminal cases should be reported to the police and are usually handled in a lawcourt, but civil and petty criminal cases can either be settled by the village council or by an official *panchayat* court.[16]

This multiplicity of procedures exposes the Badagas to three different legal systems: their own indigenous one, still influential in establishing precedents; the present-day Badaga village council which settles disputes according to a majority opinion (an opinion voiced, however, by the headman and modified by the knowledge that the case may then be taken, together with the decision, before a court of law); and finally the increasingly popular hierarchy of government law courts.

THE PRESENT AMBILEGAL SITUATION

With such a confusion of courts, officials, regulations and legal options, how does a Badaga choose which medium to use? The prime consideration is apparently not the seriousness of the

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

622
624

capacity as village munsif [*manegar*] and Magistrate. He has to prepare reports, accounts, statements, etc., which it is necessary to put in writing . . .': Madras, 1958, I.

622
661

14. Thurston 1909, vol. I, 80. This unusual treatment was not obligatory and was rarely possible because a *manegar's* rounds were short and could not have kept him away from home at night. A *manegar* with a penchant for girls would quickly have lost his reputation.

●623

15. The India-wide term for a village council. The distinction between civil and criminal law is made explicit in the *Indian Penal Code*, which in this matter closely follows English common law.

692
[623]

16. The *panchayat* members are supposedly elected every four years; their position is prestigeful but unpaid. The chosen representatives tend to be relatively well-educated but rarely village headmen. The powers of this court, which is at the lowest level in the hierarchy of lawcourts, are: '. . . to take cognizance of and try specified offences of a trivial nature and abetment of such offences committed within the local limits of their respective jurisdiction. Such offences are affray . . ., voluntarily causing hurt . . ., assault or using criminal force . . ., theft . . ., and mischief . . ., insult . . ., some nuisances . . ., and generally any other offence under the Indian Penal Code or any special or local law which is punishable with fine only or with imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or with both.' Madras, 1958, 50.

692
622

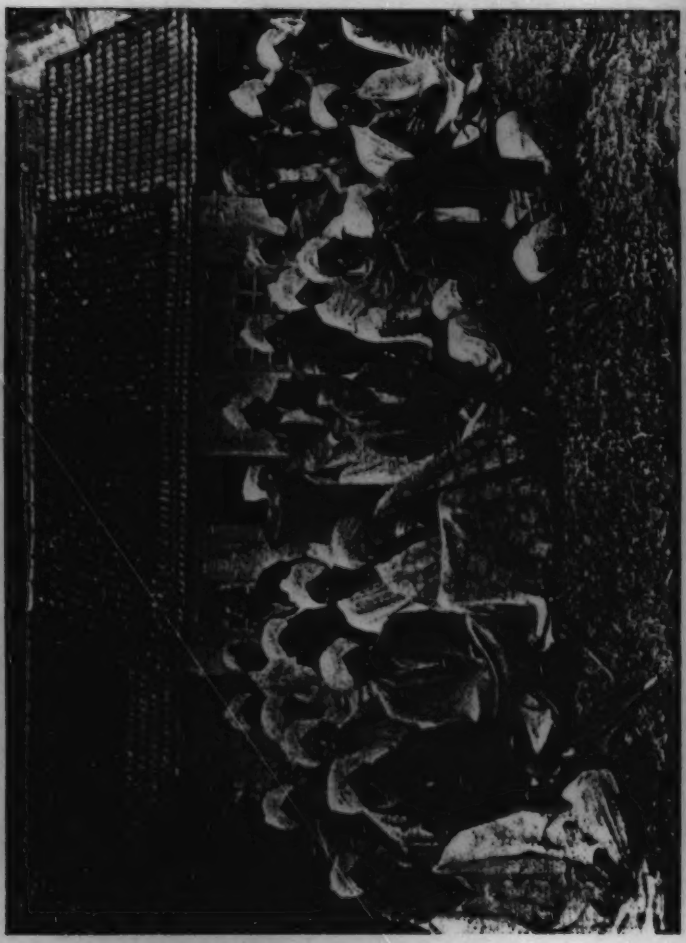
17. It is supposedly the headman's duty to decide whether a case should be taken before a magistrate.

18. This case remained unsettled in 1975 (all names used are fictitious).

128
[159]

19. 'Satchit', 1940, 15; Dharmalingam, 1962; see Diagram 9. Just before his death H. B. Ari Gowder corrected what I have here written about his life.

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50



142
291
293
516
623
632

Pl. 12

[Following p. 248-L]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

Plate Section

361 Plate 1 A typical Badaga hamlet (Dimbaṭṭi), above the valley floor but sheltered by a hill from the south-west monsoons. Note the strips of land running downhill. The well in the foreground is new.

342 Plate 2 Typical work-space (ke:ri) in front of houses in Ka:ṭe:ri. The two-story house is a twentieth-century innovation. The poles carry electricity to most houses.

291 Plate 3 A Toda couple, both wearing embroidered shawls (pu:txuḽ).

301 643 Plate 4 Pāda Rāja Gowder, paramount chief of the Badagas since 1956, and headman of Tu:ne:ri. His gold earrings are of a traditional design.

302 877 Plate 5 Two schoolgirls carrying their lunch, O:ranaṛi hamlet. Both have an auspicious mark on the brow.

302 759 Plate 6 Sithamma, grandmother of the girls in Plate 5; she lived in O:ranayi, was a traditional Lingayat, and a noted herbal therapist. Her gold ornaments are traditional.

000 Plate 7 Kumba:ras in Kempola hamlet, here enshrouded in mist.

177 764 Plate 8 Kotas from Kolmel playing for Lingayats dancing during a funeral at the neighbouring hamlet of O:ranayi, 1963. Women do not dance in public.

243 231 Plate 9 Cattle threshing grain on a work-space in O:ranayi. The hired labourers are non-Badagas.

496 291 Plate 10 Women's work-group outside a house in Ki:ṛkunda village. All wear sarees in place of the traditional dress.

778 782 Plate 11 The Goddess Hette with bell, a wreathed *linga*, and a tray with plantain and half-coconut offerings, decorating a Lingayat temple in Ka:ṭe:ri.

● 623 Plate 12 Council of elders at Ke:ti village. The commune headman is on the extreme left, in white.

[p. 25]

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Lovers and Prostitutes

582 3.6. Badaga girls used to be married shortly after puberty and youths in their late adolescence. Various social pressures, most (178) importantly the new educational requirements, have increased these (626) ages until today a girl gets married at about 16 and a young man in his early 20s. Since births are not registered it is possible for parents to claim their daughter is older than she really is at marriage: recent legislation about age at marriage (18 for girls, 21 for men) might sometimes prompt them to do so.

836 One effect of this raising of the appropriate age for marriage has been an increase in premarital sex activity among male youths. The corresponding phenomenon does not seem to have occurred among (562) the girls, however; quite the opposite, in fact. I was told that a "double standard" has recently appeared, in that if an unmarried man is known to be having an affair he is not thought badly of, whereas if a young woman does so she is mocked by other villagers and considered very immoral. This development has come about 836 since mid-century because of changing attitudes towards pregnancy. 543 In earlier days an unmarried girl would have affairs without any great fear of pregnancy, because she knew that if she did become (623) pregnant she could go before the village council, name the father, (692) and he would be forced to marry the girl concerned. She only had to assert that a man was the father and he would have to marry and support her — even if he already had a wife. Should a man refuse (684) to accept the council's decision on the matter he could be outcasted and ordered out of the village, his property divided among his brothers, and a share of it given to support the pregnant girl. This, rather than an abortion, was the normal procedure. Today an unmarried 178 woman is very circumspect even if she has reached the age of 30. 836 She knows that a ruined reputation can spoil her chances of an 581 advantageous marriage, and the village council has little power to force a wayward man into marrying or supporting her today.

836 3.7. As with much else in Indian social organization, there is a hier- 582 archy in the frequency and acceptability of extra-marital sexual partners, as outlined below.

(*a*) Most frequently chosen is a girl related as affine to a boy; they are a couple who might later marry without offence. Usually this means the girl would have to be of the same phratry but a different clan, and live in a different village from the boy's. If the parents

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

gingly of the elderly: "After becoming aged one's greed increases;" more sarcastic ones on the same theme are these: "As greed increases, the lifetime lessens," "As mist catches onto a peak, so her vilest characteristics catch hold of an old woman," and again, "Is it medicine for old age, like advice for a bad time?" This latter one refers to the belief that there is no further need for medicine when a person is old, just as a bad man is beyond need of advice. (The general world for all kinds of medicine, *maddu*, is used in this last proverb; it also means "magical potion," "opium" and "poison," however).

9.2. The general attitude towards adult women is not a charitable one: it is succinctly summed up in the saying, "The man knows the nature of others; his wife is an expert in cooking." In contrast to this, though, the status of women is never higher than in old age, and in a few cases old ladies have been members of the otherwise all-male village councils. The Lingayat Badagas in fact treat a post-menopausal woman as a man; but most Badagas do not, for if orthodox they still prohibit an old woman from eating or drinking in the inner and most sacred parts of the house. No ceremonies mark the occurrence of menopause; but Lingayat women are often given a *Linga* symbol to wear after it has occurred.

9.3. Older people have friends in their own village, but not elsewhere because of the difficulty they have in getting around. They select friends of equal age, and hence similar memories; but whether or not the friends are equally well-to-do seems unimportant. A pair of widows or else a pair of widowers are commonly good friends; and provided they are very old, even a widow and a widower can be close friends, treating each other as fictive brother and sister, without other villagers misinterpreting the relationship. Again, if they are extremely elderly, two men and their two wives may treat each other as *four* brothers. Then there is nothing scandalous about an old man sitting with the wife of his friend and talking to her for hours. In contrast with this, an old man with a young wife will not be particularly friendly with another old man whose wife is elderly.

9.4. It is believed that if a man wears gold his lifetime will lengthen. If on the other hand he sees two crows in the act of sexual congress, he will die within a year. An elderly man receives this information calmly; but a younger man will try to avoid his fate by counteracting the omen. This is done by going to a hill above a neighbouring hamlet, and shouting out to the villagers that he—mentioning himself by name—is dead. As he is careful that no one

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

rational manipulation—imponderable factors like the will of God, for example—others are as close to the individual as the diseases that afflict his own body. It seems that all Badagas recognize six kinds of specialists as mediators between the individual and his cultural and biological environment. (Their importance is incidentally expressed in a proverb: "You should not stay in a village without a mediator [even till] noon.")

The first of these categories is the paramount chief (*na:ku betta gauda*) of all the Badagas, a man whose powers are now greatly diminished, but who in earlier times was ultimately responsible for mediating between the community and the outside world. This meant that he was obliged to intercede with and pay revenue to the Muslim overlords in the eighteenth century and the East India Company in the early nineteenth century. Since then he has continued to mediate between the Badagas and the Toda, Kota and Kurumba tribes on issues that concern the entire community.

Secondly, each hamlet headman (*gauda*), aided by a small council of elders, is responsible for mediating between the individual and the traditional laws and customs of the community. He is thus responsible for conformity and punishment in his hamlet.

Thirdly, the priest in each village, as everywhere else in India, is responsible for mediating between man and the gods. His ability to gain their attention and win their support is crucial for the fertility of crops and cattle, and hence for the well-being of the village community.

These three types of mediators are not primarily concerned with issues of health, except incidentally when a village has to be vacated during an epidemic. But the other three mediators are all health specialists. The midwife is concerned with the yet unborn. The therapist deals with problems of the living body (human or animal). The exorcist mediates between the community and the ghosts of the dead. Each is thus relied upon for mediation in a well-defined sphere, as Diagram 5 illustrates.

This "sphere of mediation" that separates the individual Badaga from the problems of everyday life differs in its economic dimension from comparable mediation in the Western world. We normally pay our doctor or dentist for his professional services when we feel we need them; the Badaga normally does *not* pay directly for any of these six types of mediator, and indeed it is by no means always the suffering individual who makes the decision to

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

182
793
759
791
643
648
622
623

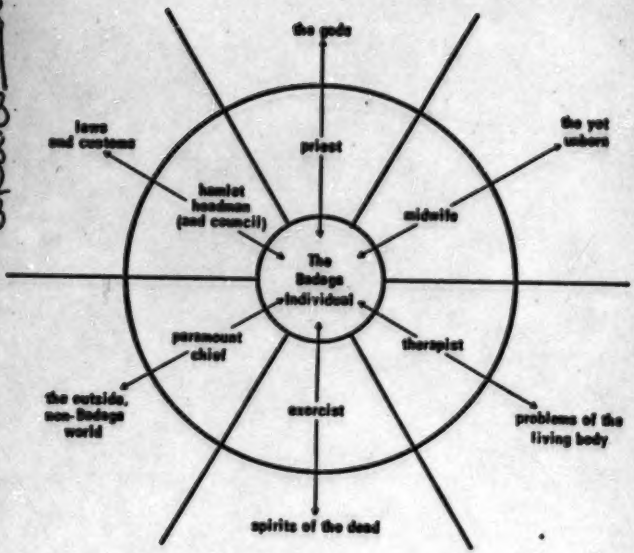


Diagram 5 : Spheres of Mediation

182 call in an appropriate mediator. As we shall see in the following section a token fee, travel expenses, or a small gift are the greatest material rewards that most therapists would expect as a matter of course. The prestige that comes from serving their community is in fact a more important consideration for all of the mediators; and when we recall that most therapists and all midwives are in fact women, it is understandable that they would not be practising out of a desire for material gain, since adult women are invariably married or widowed and thus are to be fully supported by their husbands or sons. In the words of the proverb, "If your lifetime is worth six [of something], taking care of [others'.] life is a hundred times more valuable." The therapists try their best, but their fellow villagers do not seem to expect miracles from them. It is worth noting that Badagas credit only the male exorcists with some

182
759
691

632 When a festival has to be organized that only concerns perhaps one of the phratries
(615) resident in a "village", the relevant hamlets call together their own multi-hamlet committee to handle the matter without calling upon the "village" headman to organize the celebration. It is only for festivals that concern nearly all of the hamlets that he will take charge of the organization. No festivals are celebrated
619 jointly by a division, or by the whole Nilgiri population, largely because the distances to be traveled are too great and the number of participants would be unmanageably large. Funerals are always treated as public ceremonies, and weddings quite
796 often are. Other life-cycle ceremonies can be treated as public ones, but very
(621) rarely are. In any case, when a life-cycle ceremony is treated as a public celebration, it is only celebrated in the hamlet of the people most closely concerned. Personal ceremonies are not celebrated at the "village" or any higher level. (This does not of course preclude inviting visitors from other "villagers" or divisions.)

The headman does not make the arrangements for these various celebra-
•623 tions of his own accord. His hamlet generally has a council for settling disputes,
(622) and also a festival committee consisting of the priests and a few elderly men. The latter not only organize festivals, but occasionally may plan to build a new temple or propitiate an uncooperative deity. (Arrangements for life-cycle ceremonies, unlike public festivals, are mainly in the hands of the family concerned.) The elders on the hamlet council are generally different individuals than those on the
(1428) festival committee; this is a convenient division of the labor involved. But in either
(562) case the positions are quite often hereditary, and are never held by women. The
(888) elders are typically the older males of all lineages represented in a hamlet; it is they who are in the best position to enforce council decisions among all of their

lineage-kin.

The hamlet council, together with the hamlet headman, is at the lowest stage in a hierarchy of traditional councils and headmen. Some examples of how these councils work will be given when we discuss the changes they have been subjected to during the present century. We will now explain the working of the hamlet council, however, in broad outline.

Any villager with a dispute must take the matter to his own hamlet headman first, for the consideration of the hamlet council. If the defendant is from another hamlet, the plaintiff's headman will approach the headman of the other hamlet and they will arrange a joint council. If one party becomes dissatisfied with the manner in which the hamlet council has handled the case, or if the hamlet council has been unable to reach a decision, the case can be passed on to the level of the "village" council. As soon as the "village" headman hears about it, his first task is to enquire whether the case has already been heard by the hamlet council; for, as with the official Indian legal system, no case can come before a higher court before it has passed through the lower-level court. The "village" headman calls together a council consisting of all the hamlet headmen of his "village", as well as various assistants to these headmen and perhaps a few other respected elders. This group constitutes the council at the "village" level. In the same way, the divisional headman can call together a council of all the "village" headmen in his division, or the President of the Nilgiris can call a meeting of all the "village" headmen of all four divisions.

These last two steps are only taken on very rare occasions, especially in the present century, to settle factional disputes which have reached serious proportions without being resolved. The last such meeting was in June, 1957 (Dharma-

428 to her late husband's estate. Occasionally a son who is to inherit is considered
(622) insane or otherwise incapacitated. Under such circumstances a village head-
(623) man and council would give his share of the inheritance directly to *his* son or else to whichever person was supporting him.

595 Inheritance problems most commonly arise when an aging man has no
(428) sons. He may then marry a young woman, probably his second or third wife,
(837) in the hope that she will produce a son. (He may even encourage his younger brother to sleep with her.) Alternatively, he will adopt a son. At its simplest, this could involve bringing his brother's son or another agnatic male into the
597 household. The latter could even begin to run the household and enjoy the
(425) property before the owner's death, and if the headman and the relatives accepted this situation the property might be fully transferred to this person before the old man died. Where no male descendant exists, and none has
428 been adopted, the dead man's property is divided equally between his
(136) brothers, who are then obliged to apportion some of it for the support of his daughters and/or widow. Once she dies that portion reverts to the brothers. It may of course happen that one or two of his brothers have already died before a childless man dies. In that case the sons of those dead brothers would still inherit their portions. Several sons of one dead brother divide their father's share equally amongst themselves, but it is no larger than the share that each of their living uncles receives.

593 The brother of a dead man does not formally adopt the orphaned
736 children, but it is he who should bring them up and arrange their marriages.
428 Once the male orphans are adults they take over their father's property from
(425) their uncle who has been managing it. In this situation the village council
(623) would nonetheless award a part of the property to that uncle in recompense for his services.

428 When brothers are dividing up an inheritance among themselves, they
425 give a share called *tale ku:ru* ("head dividend") to their eldest brother's eldest son provided that he is older than every other brother's son. In effect this person is treated by them as a younger brother rather than a nephew except that his share is smaller than that of the brothers. When his own father, the eldest of the brothers, dies, his property is divided in equal portions in the usual manner amongst all of his sons. Since his eldest son already owns the "head dividend," that is not touched. The end result is that the eldest son of an eldest brother often inherits a bit more property than his younger brothers do.

6. Kinship Vocabulary

551 It is a feature of Badaga speech that a third party is referred to by his
601 connection to the person addressed. Thus when a man is speaking about his own wife, he does not say "my wife," but refers to her by her relationship to the person he is addressing, even though this may involve quite complicated vocabulary. However, in the case where the man is talking to his FF

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
AW50 Badaga AW50

dynasty of Madura. To these Nâyakkas or Vaḍugas the Baḍagas were allied, and they were thus originally the Śûdras of the Maisûr country. They were, however, completely Âryanised before they commenced their march three centuries ago to the district where they now live, and it is therefore not surprising that they should have brought with them many of the ancient Âryan institutions.

Chief among these may be noted the system of local self-government that even yet exists among them though in an impaired form. From the traces that are still left it is evident that the village community system prevailed among them in a complete state in the old days of their settlement on the Nîlagiris.

Each village has a head man called the Monegar. He is generally the richest man in the village, and is regarded as the highest authority upon all subjects. Before the year 1820, while the Nîlagiri district had not yet been made a separate district but only formed a single tâlûk in the Coimbatore district, the power of these Monegars was much greater than it is now. At that time communication was difficult and much of the Nîlagiris had not yet been opened up, and in the different villages the Monegar was the paramount power. Stories are current even to the present day of a Monegar of one village who ordered an individual who had disobeyed his orders to be covered with a slab of stone. Unless the disobedience was of a most flagrant nature and really amounted to a determined disregard of constituted authority, such a high-handed exercise of autocratic power must have been resented by the people, for the Monegar was not an irresponsible autocrat, but a ruler holding his power by the goodwill of the whole community. The British Government has made these Monegars officials in connection with the revenue administration of the villages, but apart from this they still have certain important duties to perform in connection with the social life of the Baḍaga community. In all religious and social questions the Baḍagas go to the village Monegar. If the question is a simple one he settles it himself, if it is intricate he calls a village council to which the elders of the village are summoned. After taking their opinion he passes an order which must be obeyed, for his word is law.

Questions of partition, of cultivation and of outcasting, disputes and other minor matters, are thus settled by the village council with the Monegar as its head. It is, however, in questions arising in connexion with marriage that the Monegar and his council play their most important part. When a girl in one village is going to

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
AW50 Badaga AW50

622 584 [623] be married to a boy in another village, the parents of the young people have to represent the matter to the Monegars of their respective villages. This is done after the courtship stage has been reached and the young people have agreed to marry one another, but even then if for any reason the Monegar forbids the contracting of the marriage the matter must at once stop, and no appeal to any higher authority is possible. Such a thing rarely occurs, but when it does there is no remedy, except that it may be possible to induce the Monegar to alter his decision by means of a judiciously administered bribe.

595 622 627 681 622 627 684 Owing to the existence of polyandry and ideas connected with it, things that would be regarded by other peoples as the gravest offences against morality are tolerated or even approved of by Badaga public opinion. Offences against the curious rules for the regulation of family life that obtain among the Badagas are brought to the village Monegar, who punishes the culprits by inflicting fines upon them. But however lax the Badagas may be in their ideas of morality within the family, they regard with the greatest displeasure and visit with the severest punishment any one who goes astray with a man of another caste, even though he be of the Brahman caste. The village Monegar conducts an enquiry, and if he finds the guilt of the accused person proved, he pronounces sentence of excommunication, and the unfortunate woman loses her caste and is driven from the community.

622 627 586 [623] The village Monegar is also president of the divorce court—for, as was stated in my previous article, divorce, which is not uncommon in the Badaga community, can, after the cord-tying ceremony has been performed, be granted only by a regular decision of the Monegar and his village council. If a man and his wife do not like one another they have to bring the matter before the Monegar. He assembles a court, and himself acting as its president sanctions a separation or deals with the matter otherwise. If separation is ordered the person who is to take the divorced woman as his wife returns the *Sila hayé* or cloth money (Rs. 1½), and the price originally paid to her by her first husband. The children, if there be any, belong to the father. The woman if she dislikes her second husband may apply for a second separation. Society does not look upon her as a bad woman because of these divorces or separations, and recognises all her children as lawfully born Badagas.

586 621 622 623 One more illustration may be given of the functions of the Monegar and the village council. If any Badaga family becomes very

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
AW50 Badaga AW50

poor and unable to maintain itself, the village Monegar himself by his own authority or on the representation of the fact by some of the villagers calls a council, and as its head directs that each well-to-do Badaga family of the village shall give to the destitute Badaga so much of their property—land, grain, vessels, houses, &c. This custom is of special interest as showing how much vitality the idea of joint property still possesses, an idea specially characteristic of the old village-community system. The importance of the Monegar and of the village council in all matters affecting the social life of the Badaga community also throws some light on its original constitution. In all the cases referred to above nothing can be done without that important functionary, the Monegar, and in everything affecting the existence of a Badaga in his village the Monegar's word is law.

We have now traced a Badaga from his birth onwards, and it only remains to describe the rites that are performed on the occasion of his death and funeral. If the person who has died is less than five years old, there is no elaborate ceremonial, but in the case of others the funeral rites are both elaborate and interesting. As soon as all hope of recovery is gone, the dying man is given a gold coin (*Virarâyan panam*), dipped in ghee, to swallow. The relations feel happy if he swallows it, for they think that that money will be serviceable to him in the other world. If he is unable to swallow it, it is tied round his arm. Let us suppose that he has drawn his last breath and let us trace the after rites. If the person that is dead is a married man, the parents or other relatives of the wife are already in attendance for the occasion and present her with a cloth, of any colour except white, worth Rs. 5. This is called the *Mukkâdu* cloth and is meant to cover her face while weeping. It is thus almost equivalent to the mourning dress of the widow in modern civilized nations. All the wife's jewels, which consist of a gold *Mûkkutti*—nose ring—*Velli Surupapi*—silver hand-bangle—and a pair of finger-rings, are removed. Her *Kadukkan*—ear-ring—alone is left on her. Unlike the custom of other Hindu societies the dead body remains inside the house till the time of its removal and is not removed to the threshold as soon as life is extinct, but the relatives do not eat till the body is about to be removed from the house. News is sent out at once to all the neighbouring villages of the death that has occurred and people begin to pour in. The death news is carried by the Torayas, who perform many services for the Badagas for all of which they receive